NOTICE

Public-Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Research Dataset

Background

In December of 2009, the administration issued an Open Government Directive that directs agencies to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration. One of HUD's key transparency initiatives is to enhance researcher access to information on households receiving HUD rental assistance.

While a great many questions regarding HUD programs can be addressed using aggregate data, such as HUD's "Picture of Subsidized Households", some questions require tenant-level data. In response, HUD is releasing a five-percent sample of household records from HUD's rental assistance programs. A five percent sample is large enough to be reasonably representative of the overall population, but small enough to maintain confidentiality. The data extract will be limited to the largest programs:

- Housing Choice Vouchers
- Public Housing
- Project-based Section 8
- Section 202
- Section 811

A primary concern is protection of tenant privacy—HUD will ensure that no personally identifiable information, such as social security numbers, names, and dates of birth or addresses is released. It will not be possible to identify any individual or household from the PUMS data.

Data Details

- The data include details about households receiving rental assistance, including information on their family size, income, rent and utility payments, and number of bedrooms in their unit.
- The data also provide information on the location where each household lives, including the state, whether the location is in an urban area, whether the location is in a metropolitan area, and the poverty rate of the location's census tract.
- HUD is taking special steps to protect confidentiality, including
 - Not identifying state for programs with fewer than 500 households in the state; and
 - Masking state, program and other fields for any households with unique combinations of variables.

Data Access

To access HUD's new PUMS database, users must provide their names, institutions and email addresses and further agree that any data will be used for legitimate research purposes and will in no way be used to attempt to identify households.

Summary

HUD believes providing this information to researchers in an easy-to-use format will enable those outside of the Department to better understand how programs are performing. It will enable the Department to provide better programs and services as well as to respond more rapidly to changing conditions. Better information means better decisions. Putting better information in the hands of policy- and decision-makers is a principal goal of the administration through the open government initiative.



